**Alaska Food Policy Council**
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April 19, 2024

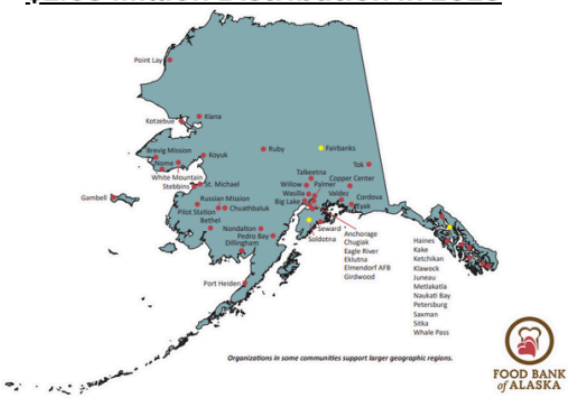
Dear Senator Finance Committee Members:

The Alaska Food Policy Council has worked since 2010 on raising awareness and developing policy solutions to increase food security across the state. As a member of the Alaska Food Coalition, we have the honor of working closely with the Food Bank of Alaska and food banks and pantries who, as an experienced and dedicated statewide anti-hunger network, are directly helping Alaskan families access food every day.

The Governor recognizes the immediate and effective impact of funding direct food purchases. The proposed FY25 budget included $1.5 million to the Department of Health (DOH) and the FY24 supplemental included $3 million to the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development (DCCED). Yesterday, with the rollout of the Senate Finance Committee's first committee substitute for the HB268 operating budget, the FY24 supplemental funds to the DCCED for bulk food purchases were not included. **We ask that you amend the operating budget to restore the governor's proposed amount.**

We have seen the high return on investment for this kind of appropriation. Last spring, the DOH allocated $1.68 million to Food Bank of Alaska (FBA) and their three partner affiliates to allow them to meet the need better and address ongoing food shortages. All FBA partners had access to food through bulk food purchase orders. Local partners in Anchorage and the Mat-Su Valley picked up or got food dropped off depending on their capacity. *In total, 73 food banks and pantries distributed over 580,000 pounds of food to community members in need.* This would not have been possible without that funding.

**$1.68 Million Distribution in 2023**




In every corner of the state, including in your district, our food pantries are experiencing record-high need and record-low donations. This one-time funding is a critical opportunity for you to support us in feeding our neighbors. Again, **we ask you to restore the $3 million for bulk food purchases in HB 268 Approp: Operating Budget; Cap; Supp; Am**.

Sincerely,

**Robbi Mixon**
Executive Director, Alaska Food Policy Council
*The Alaska Food Policy Council is a proud member of the Alaska Food Coalition*